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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KRENKEL (Austria)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 93: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (continued)

(a) QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/47/214-E/1992/50, A/47/216-E/1992/43, A/47/339, 349, 369, 415 and Corr.1; A/C.3/47/4)

(b) CRIME PREVENTION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE (continued) (A/47/80-S/23502, A/47/87, A/47/88-S/23563, A/47/232-S/24025 and Corr.1, A/47/312-S/24238, A/47/344, A/47/356-S/24367, A/47/379, 381, 391, 399 and Corr.1)

1. Mr. ELDEEB (Egypt) said that his country attached particular importance to social development, which was a basic priority in Egypt's overall strategy for social and economic growth. It had adopted ambitious programmes for the advancement of its own society and constantly strove to participate effectively in regional and international cooperation programmes for social development.

2. The reports of the Secretary-General on the agenda item under consideration indicated that, despite all the efforts made, progress in the field of social development was still well below target. That was probably a result of the economic difficulties being experienced world wide and also of the aftermath of war in some countries, which had delayed the implementation of development plans.

3. The facts which the reports of the Secretary-General on the world social situation gave concerning poverty, health care, child malnutrition and lack of basic education were cause for concern. The international community should extend a helping hand to those in need, so that they could restore some kind of dignity to their lives.

4. His delegation believed that social and economic development went hand in hand, since they both aimed to raise living standards and improve society. International cooperation for development should aim to strike a balance between the world's resources and needs. Narrowing the gap between rich and poor would help to build lasting peace and, ultimately, to further social development.

5. His delegation welcomed the recommendation to convene a world summit for social development in 1995, which would provide an opportunity for cooperation and for focusing on social development activities at the national, regional and international level. He applauded the preparations already under way. With regard to the issues to be addressed by the summit, it was extremely important that preparatory meetings be held in order to coordinate the efforts of the relevant United Nations bodies, delegations of Member State and other organizations active in social development, with a view to ensuring the success of the summit.

(Mr. Eldeeb, Egypt)

6. In his country, social matters ranked high on the list of priorities in terms of government policies, plans and programmes. Egypt's cultural heritage had immortalized man, regarding him as the very essence of life, while Islamic values helped to uplift society both spiritually and materially. Respect for human rights and basic human needs was also given great emphasis.

7. The two statements which his delegation had made to the General Assembly on disabled persons and ageing reflected his country's interest in both issues. His delegation was also especially concerned about youth, who were the backbone of any society. Youth programmes undoubtedly had a positive impact on society, both internally and in the broader context. Referring to the lack of youth education opportunities cited in document A/47/349, his delegation supported joint international action aimed at implementing youth development programmes and improving national, regional and international contacts among youth. It also commended preparations for the tenth anniversary in 1995 of the International Youth Year and for the world youth programme of action towards the year 2000 and beyond. Reflecting its concern for youth-related issues, his delegation had co-sponsored draft resolution A/C.3/47/L.11 on policies and programmes involving youth, which was the outcome of constructive cooperation among the various sponsors.

8. With regard to the family, he praised the ongoing preparations for the International Year of the Family in 1994. It was important to establish national mechanisms which could also make preparations in conjunction with the specialized agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations. His delegation hoped that the International Year of the Family would help focus international attention on the pivotal role played by the family in social development.

9. Population growth posed a threat to society wherever there was an imbalance between the population growth rate and resources: achieving a balance between the two was therefore essential. In that connection, he affirmed the importance of the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in Cairo in 1994. That Conference would undoubtedly be one of the most significant events in the field of social development during the final decade of the twentieth century.

10. Mr. SHOOGUFAN (Afghanistan) said that, in view of the relationship between social development and economic growth and the expected release of considerable resources as a result of disarmament, there was a need for new approaches to solving such social problems as disability, drug abuse, the plight of refugees and crime. Fourteen years of war in Afghanistan had destroyed the economic and social fabric of its society and caused heavy human and material losses. Over 2 million Afghans were disabled, the highest number in any country, and that number was unfortunately increasing because of the indiscriminate laying of mines throughout the country. The war had also reduced the already limited access to education in Afghanistan. More than 2,000 school buildings had been totally destroyed and the remaining facilities

(Mr. Shoogufan, Afghanistan)

were either damaged or closed. The repatriation of 6 million refugees and the return of 2 million internally displaced persons would further complicate that situation.

11. A whole generation of Afghan children and young people had suffered from the war and were exposed to an unfavourable social environment with very negative consequences. Afghan women assumed an enormous burden in coping with the social problems facing their families. The extent of the damage to traditional family values was very disturbing.

12. A land-locked, least developed country, Afghanistan had the highest mortality rate in the world. Hundreds of health care centres had been destroyed or damaged during the war and medical personnel had been forced to leave the country. Only a handful of hospitals were functioning and the situation was further complicated by the mass repatriation of refugees. Since the Government and people of Afghanistan were not in a position to address those problems adequately, a comprehensive package of short- and long-term policies and programmes must be worked out with the support of the international community.

13. His delegation welcomed the emerging consensus on the relationship between social development and economic growth. Major events such as the world summit for social development in 1995 would provide good opportunities for Member States and international bodies to reformulate their social policies and programmes. Lastly, it was gratifying to note the offer by the Danish Government to host the world summit in Copenhagen.

14. Mr. AL-KINDI (United Arab Emirates) said that international cooperation was vital for the revival of world-wide economic and social growth. His country had taken initiatives to help countries whose living standards had declined as a result of war or natural disaster. At home, it was implementing a development policy aimed at fostering balanced development and equitable growth, in addition to other plans offering education, health and social services. Various institutions, centres and units had been built to cater for the different social groups.

15. No improvement would be seen in the social situation world wide unless all countries pooled their knowledge and expertise. As the United Nations was the only body capable of creating the necessary links in that connection, its Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs at Vienna should be strengthened.

16. Population growth was cause for concern, particularly in the developing countries, as it hindered the implementation of social and economic development policies. New policies should therefore be devised to respond effectively to present and future human needs, and cooperation should be intensified to create a fairer social system. His delegation supported the holding of a world summit for social development in 1995 as a means of

(Mr. Al-Kindi, United Arab Emirates)

alleviating poverty, increasing employment opportunities and improving social conditions. It also supported the proposal made in document E/1992/80 concerning a clear and specific agenda for the summit.

17. Referring to the International Year of the Family in 1994, he emphasized the importance of the family as the basic unit of society. His country had formed national ministerial committees with a view to heightening awareness of the role and responsibility of the family in creating a sound social environment.

18. His country was undergoing a rapid social transformation and was attempting to solve the problems it faced by improving the quality of life of its citizens and providing equal opportunities. It also encouraged individual initiative. It had created mechanisms and programmes intended to instil human values in its youth and to determine standards for youth education, training and welfare which corresponded with the principles of Islam and Arab culture. A Ministry of Youth and Sports had also been established to encompass all aspects of the intellectual and physical development of young people. He urged the specialized agencies of the United Nations system to intensify their efforts to draw up practical plans for the advancement of young people for developing their technical skills and abilities.

19. He praised United Nations efforts to support the International Plan of Action on Ageing and affirmed the importance of continuing to implement the Plan until the year 2001. His country provided welfare, cultural, religious and recreational facilities for the elderly, who in any case occupied a distinguished position within the family.

20. Although the proportion of disabled persons in the United Arab Emirates was very small, they were given special consideration in social and economic development policies. They received monthly social rehabilitation allowances and several well-equipped rehabilitation centres had been built. His delegation endorsed the report of the Secretary-General concerning disabled persons (A/47/415).

21. Crime continued to increase world wide, making international cooperation in that area a pressing requirement. His country appreciated the efforts of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and supported the proposals to strengthen their respective roles and activities. The United Nations should also advise on a general policy for crime prevention and criminal justice and assist the developing countries in that regard, particularly in obtaining the necessary infrastructures and training. As its criminal legislation and policies showed, his Government was guided in the matter by the principles of Islam and by its commitment to the principles enshrined in United Nations instruments. His country stood ready to cooperate with the United Nations and with other countries in implementing the Guidelines for the prevention and control of organized crime in order to have a crime-free world where peace, stability and justice for all reigned.

22. Mr. ERDENECHULUUN (Mongolia) said that it was becoming increasingly clear that the gap between rich and poor nations could not go on growing indefinitely and that the further aggravation of social and economic problems in the South would eventually affect developed countries as well. The growing trend towards democracy, openness, protection of human rights and self-determination had exposed many hidden social problems that endangered international peace and security. The time had come for a sustained effort to deal effectively with social issues in an integrated and comprehensive manner.

23. Mongolia fully supported the convening of a world summit for social development in 1995 and welcomed the generous offer by the Danish Government to host the summit, which would provide a unique opportunity to discuss fundamental social development issues and to elaborate meaningful strategies for addressing them. Mongolia wished to participate actively in preparations for the summit, which must focus on a concise and limited agenda of interest to all countries. An effective preparatory process was necessary to ensure action-oriented results and follow-up procedures and the preparatory body should therefore be established as soon as possible. The active participation of the regional commissions, the specialized agencies and other United Nations programmes would be crucial to the summit's success. National committees should be established with the participation of all sectors to serve as focal points for preparatory activities.

24. Developing countries, particularly those, like Mongolia, that were making the transition to open economies and democratic systems, faced major social challenges. Radical structural adjustment programmes in his country had given rise to a host of economic and social problems which called for sound national policies. Governments had a major role to play in meeting the needs of the poor, the unemployed, single-parent families, women, children, youth, the elderly and the disabled. Government efforts, however, were viable only if they were supported by non-governmental organizations and international economic and financial institutions.

25. Ms. HALFHUID (Suriname) said that to varying degrees, excessive foreign debt, trade difficulties and environmental concerns had affected the social situation and the development efforts of many developing countries. At present, more than one billion people - one fifth of the world's population - were living in deplorable conditions. The declarations on social and economic development which had resulted from intensive negotiations at the eighteenth special session and at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) should be implemented. In particular, financial resources must be made available to implement various programmes to combat illiteracy and poor education and housing. Poverty eradication should be a major priority of the Organization, which would require a shift away from political issues to ways of improving the socio-economic sphere.

26. Convening a world summit for social development was a timely initiative, since poverty eradication, the implementation of human development programmes and bridging the gap between rich and poor were all challenges that would have to be met in the future.

(Ms. Halfhuid, Suriname)

27. She supported the proposed themes for the world summit, namely, the reduction of poverty, the promotion of productive employment and the fostering of social cohesion.

28. Her delegation welcomed the outcome of the special plenary meetings on disabled persons and ageing. Although awareness of the plight of disabled persons had increased over the past decade, many of them continued to experience discrimination. Her delegation supported broad action at all levels to address that situation and create a society for all by the year 2010. It welcomed the adoption of the Proclamation on Ageing and endorsed the global targets on ageing for the year 2001.

29. In recent years, the problem of youth unemployment and underemployment had worsened, especially in the least developed countries. That was partly owing to economic stagnantion, illiteracy and lack of skills, as the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/349) indicated. Juvenile delinquency was on the rise, precipitated by the problems of poverty, rapid population growth and inadequate shelter. When the aspirations of young people were not met, their integration into the social development process became marginal and limited. The external debt burden of many developing countries had resulted in spending cuts on social programmes, at the expense of youth programmes and policies. Young people were the future of any nation and, as such, should be regarded as a great resource. Her delegation hoped that the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year in 1995 would offer an opportunity to develop action-oriented programmes towards the year 2000 and beyond in order to rid society of the avoidable problems which youth had endured for so long.

30. Mr. HYON Hak Bong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the alarming social situation in the world posed a threat to international peace and security and underscored the need to find practical solutions to new social and economic problems. Although some progress had been achieved by the United Nations in that field, much remained to be done. Most developing countries were still seriously affected by such problems as poverty, hunger, unemployment, unequal income distribution and debt. His country welcomed the convening of a world summit for social development in 1995.

31. Every effort must be made to eliminate the widening gap between developed and developing countries. The developed countries should feel some responsibility for the poverty of the developing countries and remove the obstacles to their economic development. North-South dialogue should be resumed and constructive measures should be taken to establish a new, equitable international economic order. At the same time, developing countries should take practical steps to promote South-South cooperation, particularly in the areas of agriculture and public health, in order to eradicate hunger and disease.

32. The tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year would provide an important opportunity to translate principles into a sound programme of action

(Mr. Hyon Hak Bong, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

and to focus world attention on issues relating to youth. The progress made in implementing the guidelines endorsed by the General Assembly should be reviewed and appraised and programmes must be formulated to lay down future strategies for youth policies. His Government gave particular attention to the education and training of young people. At the same time, various kinds of social activities were organized to meet the particular needs of youth and ensure their full participation in society.

33. His country provided various kinds of social benefits, including pensions, to all elderly people, who enjoyed an affluent life free from want. In conclusion, his Government would continue to do its best to promote social development including that of young people and the elderly.

34. Ms. SEMAFUMU (Uganda) said that in many developing countries, the poverty and unemployment caused by the economic crisis had resulted in an increase in crime. That problem was compounded by the inability of many Governments to allocate adequate resources to law enforcement and criminal justice. An effective criminal justice system was a prerequisite for the promotion of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and an independent judiciary was the hallmark of true democracy.

35. While primary responsibility for combating crime lay with national Governments, international cooperation had a vital role to play in the fight against transnational and organized crime. Although the United Nations had made commendable efforts in developing international norms and standards, fostering viable crime prevention and criminal justice policies and improving data collection and dissemination, there was a need to focus on endogenous capacity-building through programmes responsive to the needs and priorities of Member States. Her delegation had therefore welcomed the statement of principles and programme of action of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme.

36. The report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of international cooperation in combating organized crime (A/47/381) described disturbing developments and identified restrictive interpretation of the concepts of sovereignty and jurisdiction as a serious obstacle to international cooperation. In her delegation's view, international cooperation in the fight against crime and respect for national sovereignty were not mutually exclusive, provided that such cooperation was close, coordinated and result-oriented. Greater emphasis must be placed on capacity-building and the strengthening of regional cooperation. In most African countries, criminal justice systems had been exported wholesale from colonial Powers. In many traditional societies, the main object of law had been the maintenance of social cohesion and solidarity, with emphasis on restitution, compensation and conciliatory procedures. In Western systems, by contrast, the main object was the affirmation of individual rights for the benefit of individual members of society, often at the expense of social harmony and cohesion. The tendency in

(Ms. Semafumu, Uganda)

the post-colonial era had been for the customary and modern systems to coexist. The economic crisis of the 1980s and the resulting inefficiency in administering justice had further undermined public confidence in law enforcement systems. In order to restore that confidence, the criminal justice system must be reformed to ensure that it reflected the social conscience and appealed to the sense of moral responsibility of the ordinary African. In addition, efforts must be made to provide more impoverished and often illiterate citizens with greater access to less alienating law enforcement and criminal justice institutions.

37. As the host country of the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Uganda had welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/153 and was grateful to those countries and organizations which had supported the Institute. Nevertheless, her delegation was disappointed that the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/379) did not contain any proposals on long-term funding for the Institute. It hoped that such proposals would be forthcoming within the next biennium. A grant of $180,000 had been approved by the Fifth Committee to cover the Institute's operating expenses for 1992. Her delegation would appreciate clarification of the reasons why only $46,000 had actually reached the Institute thus far. At the current session, the African Group would submit a resolution reiterating the request made to the Secretary-General in paragraph 2 of resolution 46/153.

38. In conclusion, her delegation hoped that the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme would increase commitment at all levels to the fight against crime and result in more fruitful cooperation in that field.

39. Miss SEMGURUKA (United Republic of Tanzania) noted that the United Nations was attaching increasing importance to social issues. The ending of the East-West conflict had provided the international community with an opportunity to concentrate on the well-being of peoples and to enhance North-South cooperation in the eradication of poverty. Peace and prosperity would remain unattainable in the North as long as the South continued to experience extreme deprivation. The AIDS pandemic, refugee problems, international terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime were but a few examples of world social problems requiring a global response. The convening of a world summit for social development in 1995 was timely. Her delegation hoped that the summit would contribute to existing efforts to reduce poverty, increase employment world wide and generally improve social conditions. It thanked the Government of Denmark for agreeing to host the summit and was pleased that such an important meeting would take place in a country which had dedicated itself to the well-being of the developing countries.

40. Her delegation supported the programmes outlined in the report of the Secretary-General on policies and programmes involving youth (A/47/349) and hoped that they would help to promote national programmes. In 1975, Tanzania

(Miss Semguruka, United Republic of Tanzania)

had instituted seven years of compulsory primary education for all children. Unfortunately, adverse economic conditions had led to a scarcity of teaching materials and adequately trained teaching staff, thereby affecting the quality of education. Because the secondary and vocational schools available could not absorb all primary school-leavers, the number of drop-outs was increasing yearly. Tanzania had elaborate programmes designed to address the problems of youth, but lacked the resources to implement them. Poverty thus remained the central problem. The observance of the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year in 1995 would provide an opportunity to review youth programmes. No long-term social development could be achieved without implementing the necessary youth programmes.

41. The rapid economic and social change taking place in Tanzania was bound to make ageing a national, rather than a family, problem in the near future. Already, migration to the cities and abroad and the difficult economic situation were limiting the ability of children to return home to care for their parents and forcing them to concentrate on their immediate families. If that situation persisted, the elderly would soon be left without traditional assistance from their children. The possibility of implementing programmes for ageing in the developing countries should be explored.

42. With regard to cooperatives, Tanzania supported their role in social development and welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on their revitalization.

43. The new world order provided opportunities for enhancing the common struggle against poverty. In an increasingly interdependent world, the development of the South was a prerequisite for world peace and stability. All nations should therefore work in harmony to address the issues of poverty, fair trade practices, debt and the environment. Tanzania would continue to play its modest role in those efforts.

44. Mrs. BAZINDRE (Niger) said that the international economic crisis, had seriously limited the economic and social development policies and programmes undertaken by third world countries. Those countries were being forced to make painful structural adjustments which, in their current form, had helped neither to reduce poverty nor to improve social conditions. On the contrary, they had led to massive redundancies and to the closing of some businesses. The unemployed in third world countries received no benefits, unlike their counterparts in rich countries, and sometimes succumbed to the temptation of crime or theft to meet their basic needs. There was a close correlation between economic growth and social development and between social well-being and development in general. Above all, social development meant an improvement in basic living conditions and the integration of the most vulnerable groups into society.

45. In her country, the family unit remained the preferred environment for the growth and development of children, who represented hope for the future

(Mrs. Bazindre, Niger)

and the resource on which every nation relied. Consequently, children should therefore be the focus of everyone's concern. The increased attention paid to children and youth since the 1990 World Summit for Children was encouraging. A Decade of the African Child had been proclaimed and the Day of the African Child was observed each year on 16 June. The Organization of African Unity was to hold an international conference on assistance to the African children in November 1992 to draw attention to their situation and to encourage the allocation of supplementary funding to African and international programmes benefiting them.

46. In order to achieve social progress, all countries must promote equal opportunities for all members of society without distinction. Her delegation therefore supported the recommendations contained in the reports of the Secretary-General on the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/47/415) and the global targets on ageing for the year 2001 (A/47/339).

47. Her country had not been spared the effects of a lack of social development: unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, juvenile delinquency, inadequate health services, an unreliable educational system, school drop-outs, and urban housing and sanitation problems. Most of its population lived in conditions well below the minimum standard. Begging was becoming increasingly widespread because of the lack of social and educational infrastructures. Her Government had taken concrete action to improve the well-being of its people, however, despite its financial difficulties.

48. States must make every effort to meet the challenges presented by the world social situation through both national and international solidarity. Her delegation welcomed the convening of a world summit for social development in 1995, which was indicative of the importance attached to that issue by the United Nations, and hoped that the summit would focus on the underlying problems and come up with immediate, specific solutions.

49. Mrs. ARUNGU-OLENDE (Kenya) said that while many countries had endeavoured to raise their standard of living, the gap between the poor, developing countries and the rich, developed countries had not been bridged. In planning future action in the field of social development, it was important for the international community to understand why past efforts had failed and to adjust its strategies accordingly.

50. A number of sociological theories had contributed to idealizing the role of the family, assuming it to be, among other things, the primary force in nurturing children and shaping their behaviour; a unit based on a harmony of interests; and a model of fair behaviour. Yet it had also been argued that the contemporary family was far from a model of justice: discrimination and violence, particularly towards women and children, were often present. Moreover, family members were shaped not only by the family itself but also by the society in which they lived. Society therefore also had responsibilities towards the family.

(Mrs. Arungu-Olende, Kenya)

51. Many developing countries, particularly in Africa, continued to assume that the family would take care of its elderly members. While that was true in the majority of cases, it did not relieve Governments of their responsibility to plan for the elderly and to promote family structures which supported that population group. Moreover, traditional structures were evolving, even in developing countries: many young people were migrating to the cities, making it logistically impossible for them to care for elderly family members left behind.

52. The change in the overall structure of the world's population, in particular the increase in the proportion of elderly persons, called for far-reaching policy changes. Governments needed to begin long-term planning and to offer alternatives to family-centred care for the elderly, which many families might not be able to provide in the future. Developing countries in particular would need assistance in such planning.

53. The idea of convening a world summit for social development had widespread support, including that of her delegation. That idea had taken shape in part because of recent political and social developments, including advances in human rights and democracy, the end of the cold war and the emergence of new States. It was also prompted by the awareness that lasting peace and justice could not be achieved merely by eliminating the threat of military confrontation, and that progress and sustainable development could not be ensured in a world where extreme poverty, injustice and human suffering continued. The report was a useful starting point for summit preparations prepared by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

54. Her delegation hoped that the world summit would provide Governments with the opportunity to re-examine ways of meeting their obligation under the Charter of the United Nations to promote the economic and social advancement of all peoples.

55. The 1990 World Summit for Children should serve as a model in preparing for the world summit for social development. The 1990 Summit had raised awareness of the problems of children and had prompted Governments to pledge to take action based on the guidelines set forth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which her country was a party. While full implementation of the Convention had yet to be achieved, various countries, including her own, had made progress in that regard.

56. Her delegation hoped that preparations for the world summit for social development would be enhanced by the success of other upcoming conferences on related issues, including the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 and the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

57. The frank and clear picture of the activities of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA) given by the Director-General of

(Mrs. Arungu-Olende, Kenya)

the United Nations Office at Vienna in his introductory statement was most welcome, particularly at a time when United Nations structures in that area were under review. Social development activities had thus far been carried out in a very fragmented manner and would benefit from being consolidated. To that end, more support should be given to CSDHA, which was already performing effectively under difficult conditions.

58. Her Government hoped that the International Year of the Family and the world summit for social development would inspire Governments to take long-term measures in those areas.

59. Mr. PARSHIKOV (Russian Federation) said that one priority of the United Nations in the area of social development over the next two years would undoubtedly be preparations for the world summit for social development to be held in 1995. He welcomed Denmark's invitation to host the summit in Copenhagen. In view of the difficulties that the Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights had encountered, and the importance of the preparatory phase for the overall success of the world summit for social development, he commended the work done by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in preparation for the summit. The summit would be an excellent opportunity to coordinate and focus the work of the various organs of the United Nations in the area of social development.

60. The economic crisis in Russia, combined with galloping inflation, had led to a critical situation in which the social welfare needs of the population continued to increase while the Government's ability to meet them had declined drastically. The Government had concentrated its efforts on first ensuring the social well-being of the most vulnerable groups, namely, pensioners, disabled persons, underprivileged families and the student population. One main policy objective was to increase the economic activity of the working population, so that through private enterprise individuals would learn to provide for their families, actually save money and then invest it productively. The Government was promoting the concept of an active social policy designed to steer the population away from dependency on a social welfare system and passive attitudes towards economics and to encourage people to take their destiny into their own hands.

61. The unprecedented task of transforming the economy of a country the size of Russia and making its huge population adapt to an entirely new social structure could not succeed by the country's efforts alone. Russia therefore welcomed the assistance and cooperation it had received from many countries and international organizations, particularly the World Bank.

62. Russia was grateful to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the assistance it had given during the difficult period of transition to a market economy and hoped that cooperation would be enhanced in such areas as primary education, public health, nuturition and hygiene. Assistance from UNICEF was especially needed in the form of methodological expertise to

(Mr. Parshikov, Russian Federation)

implement the Federation's "Children of Russia" and "Children of Chernobyl" programmes.

63. Despite economic and social difficulties at the national level, Russia would continue to play an active role in international projects in order to benefit from the experience of other countries, which would in turn enable it to increase its contribution to the cause of social development at the international level.

64. Mr. TÜRK (Slovenia) said that the search for social policies which would genuinely ensure respect for human rights had for many years been obscured by ideological disputes. Recent political upheavals had opened the way for action on social issues and, in that connection, his delegation strongly favoured the convening of a world summit for social development.

65. At the same time, the economic problems engendered by political changes might prove to be an obstacle to the implementation of new social policies. According to the World Economic Survey 1992 (E/1992/40), growth in the 1990s might be inadequate to resolve global problems. The so-called peace dividend had vanished from sight and in conditions of continuing unemployment and sluggish demand, conversion of resources from military to civilian uses would simply add to economic woes. Among its other conclusions, the Survey had emphasized that economic development could not be achieved without social progress.

66. Social development was also a prerequisite for justice. Human rights could flourish only in a society characterized by political freedom and relative social equality. It was, of course, impossible to achieve absolute social and economic equality. In fact, as the failure of socialism in Eastern Europe demonstrated, societies which held economic and social equality as an absolute value were economically inefficient, lacked political freedom and could not ensure respect for human rights. Faced with the inevitability of relative social inequality, therefore, it was essential to develop social policies which granted protection to the least advantaged and equality of opportunity to all.

67. His delegation endorsed the convening of a world summit for social development, which it hoped would result in policy guidelines which effectively helped to achieve social development and justice world wide. He welcomed the fact that the key areas to be discussed at the summit - povery alleviation, increased employment and social cohesion - had already been identified, as that would give the necessary focus to the preparatory work. In reviewing social development issues, policy makers at both the national and the international level should bear in mind the need for short- and medium-term measures to cushion the impact of structural adjustment policies and reduce their adverse effects. It was widely acknowledged that during the structural adjustment phase, Governments needed to create social safety nets, adapted to specific situations and of limited duration, to make the social cost of economic programmes more acceptable. Such measures merited further consideration.

(Mr. Türk, Slovenia)

68. The preparatory period for the world summit for social development provided an excellent opportunity to devise appropriate policy recommendations and guidelines for coherent international action, which should be carried out by international agencies in a coordinated manner. To that end, any differences in approach between agencies should be minimized or even eliminated.

69. His Government continued to take measures for the protection of the family and children. It had begun preparations for establishing a national committee for the International Year of the Family and had acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Unemployment was one of the worst social problems in his country, having risen sharply in recent years. His Government currently provided assistance to approximately 70 per cent of the unemployed population. However, those were only short-term measures. Real progress in the field of social development could be based only on sustainable growth.

70. The rule of law was essential for a stable and democratic society and must be given priority within the overall framework of social policies. That was of particular importance in countries like Slovenia, which were undergoing social change and structural adjustment. The process of change under way in a large part of Europe had opened up opportunities for new forms of crime, particularly international organized crime. Since many of the Governments affected were not equipped to deal with that situation, there was a need for effective international cooperation in crime prevention.

71. Slovenia was particularly interested in the harmonization of legislation aimed at combating drug trafficking and preventing money laundering and criminal activities affecting the environment. It was also interested in the development of mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and other forms of international cooperation to combat crime. Increased juvenile crime was a particularly worrying phenomenon in a number of countries and called for well-thought-out social policies and sophisticated crime prevention activities. The Convention on the Rights of the Child provided a very useful framework for government action, and increased international cooperation and exchanges of views on that question would be of paramount importance.

72. Slovenia welcomed the recent steps taken by the United Nations to strengthen international cooperation in the field of crime prevention. He noted with satisfaction the establishment of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the encouraging results achieved at its first session. It was no longer possible for individual countries to cope with dangerous transnational crime and concerted action was needed to supplement national efforts. In that connection, he welcomed the emphasis on operational activities and the priorities set by the Commission.

73. Ms. ARIAS (Colombia) said that it was widely recognized that organized crime threatened international stability and that no country could escape the problem. Yet despite that consensus, the international community had made little progress towards effective cooperation in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice.

74. In his recent statement to the General Assembly, the President of Colombia had stressed the need to improve the mechanisms available for judicial cooperation among countries. No matter what form it took, organized crime had one unifying characteristic: the individuals involved supported one another and had no respect for individual States. If one State was successful in combating organized crime, criminals simply moved their base of operations to another State where the criminal justice system was less efficient. In order to strengthen international legal cooperation, the transfer and judicial approval of evidence must be facilitated and bureaucratic impediments substantially reduced. Consideration should be given to the possibility of drafting a convention on legal cooperation in criminal matters.

75. The newly established Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice must work for the implementation of the statement of principles and programme of action of the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme, the goals of which included the strengthening of regional and international cooperation in crime prevention, criminal justice and the combating of transnational crime; more efficient and effective administration of justice, with due respect for human rights; the promotion of the highest standards of fairness, humanity, justice and professional conduct; and the integration and consolidation of the efforts of Member States in preventing and combating transnational crime. Her delegation endorsed those goals and hoped that the Commission would be given the resources it needed to implement the programme of action. Moreover, to maximize the efficiency of whatever resources were provided, priorities should be established for the Commission, including the preparation of studies on ways of strengthening legal cooperation in criminal matters, the drafting of an international convention in that field and, lastly, the provision of technical assistance to countries that requested it.

OTHER MATTERS

76. The CHAIRMAN suggested that he address a letter to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee stating the following: "The Third Committee supports and fully subscribes to the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination contained in document A/47/16 regarding programmes 4, 11, 12 and 25 to 36 of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 as submitted to the Third Committee for consideration in document A/C.3/47/1 and in the President's letter of 6 October." He took it that the Committee agreed to that suggestion.

77. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.